

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 53rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE held at
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1. FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY,
19th, 20th, & 21st APRIL 1957.

Conference Sessions :

First Day : ... 11.30.a.m. to 6p.m.
Second Day : ... 2.00.P.m. to 5.30.
Third Day : ... 11.45.a.m. to 5.30.

Attendance during Conference :

	Delegates present	Branches represented
First Day	44	20
Second Day	31	18
Third Day	33	17

Branches not in attendance:

First Day : (Morning) Birmingham, Bradford, Eccles, Fulham,
Glasgow(City) Manchester, Nottingham, S.W.London.
(Afternoon) Bradford, Eccles, Glasgow(City)
Manchester, S.W.London.

Second Day : Bradford, Eccles, Fulham, Glasgow (City) Manchester,
Nottingham, S.W.London.

Third Day : Bradford, Dartford, Eccles, Fulham; Glasgow(City)
Manchester, Nottingham, S.W.London.

Branches not represented throughout the entire Conference were

Bradford, Eccles, Glasgow(City), Manchester, and S.W.London.

Conferences Expenses :

Expenditure.	£	S	D	Income.	£	S	D
Conway Hall :	52	10	0	Donation J. Bull,	5	0	0
Caretaker :	3	0	0	Collect. Friday,	11	10	0
Band :	15	0	0	J. Darcy Donation,	1	10	0
Printing Soc. Tkts	1	0	0	Collect. Saturday,	7	15	0
Kelvinave. Del.	13	10	0	H.O. Social,	2	0	0
				Catering Surplus,	4	8	6
	£85	10	0	Collection "Rally"	5	12	0
				Social,	22	1	0
				Raffle,	4	13	6
				Debit Balance	£ 64	10	0
					21	0	0
					£ 85	10	0

FRIDAY (morning) SESSION

At 11.30 a.m. The General Secretary called the assembled Delegates to order. As no nominations for Chairman had been received the General Secretary called for nominations from the floor for a Conference Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
Resolution- Lawrence (Lewisham) and Walby (Hackney)
"That A. George (Bloomsbury) and J. Edmonds (Lewisham) be Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively." Agreed.

It was agreed that the Standing Orders Committee act as tellers.

REPORT OF THE 53rd E.C. TO CONFERENCE.

1. E.C. Meetings during year. No action.
2. E.C. Attendance. No action.
3. Branches Membership and Organisation.

Moved Bloomsbury. "That resolution 8 on the Final Agenda be taken first." Agreed.

Glasgow (City) Branch: That this Conference is in favour of the Journal "Forum" being published quarterly or half yearly
Kelvingrove Delegate -with permission of Conference opened on behalf of Glasgow Branch.
Kelvingrove Delegate. was of the opinion that "Forum should be published quarterly or half-yearly and priced at about 2/6d with lengthier articles of the type written by Gilmac to the W.S. which would provide Party members with useful information. Also other technical subjects rendering "Forum" more saleable.

Paddington Delegate speaking to the Paddington Amendment.
"We have no wish to tie down the Editors of "Forum", to say that it must come out quarterly would be limiting them too much.

Lewisham Delegate speaking to Lewisham's Amendment.
"This Amendment takes a more realistic view of publishing "Forum", without tying the Editors down to dates, they could then publish as sufficient material becomes available.

Voting on Paddington's Amendment: That the resolution be amended to read as follows: That this Conference is in favour of the Journal "Forum" being published quarterly, and if sufficient contributions are received be published more frequently. Lost 14-31.

Lewisham's Amendment Lost 14-29.

Glasgow Resolution: Glasgow (City). "That this Conference is in favour of the Journal "Forum" being published quarterly or half-yearly." Lost 13-32.

Resolution 9 Hackney: "That "Forum", in its existing form, be discontinued and a monthly duplicated issue be published at a suitable price." was taken without discussion. Lost 18-29.

Resolution 7. Bloomsbury.

Bloomsbury Delegate. There seems to be a lack of material for "Forum", the position will be that the next Annual Conference can review the position and start it again if they think fit.
Bloomsbury Branch: That in view of the evident lack of contributions and support from the membership, publication of "Forum" be discontinued for the time being, and the position reviewed at the Annual Conference 1958. Carried 25-22.

I. P. J. Committee Member

I just want to tell members that there is an issue of "Forum" at the printers now, and it will be out next week. I say this in case someone accuses us of doing the dirty on them.

Resolution 1. Wood Green and Hornsey.

Delegates from Wood Green-Wickford and Southend- were in general support for the name S.P.G.B. to be changed to W.S.P. British Section. It was claimed by these Delegates that a change at this

time would benefit the Party and assist our propaganda efforts it was also said that the present name of the Party smacked of nationalism. Overseas students, national newspapers and others would then have no excuse to confuse us with the Labour Party. This new title would instantly suggest our international objective.

Delegates from Dartford Ealing and Hampstead, and two E.C. members opposed this resolution. They claimed that a change of the Party's name would not serve a useful purpose, on the contrary it would involve a lot of unnecessary hard work entailing the change of name on every piece of Party literature, stationery etc. The answer in their opinion, was the awakening on the part of the membership as a whole to the necessity of a greater effort in propagating the Party's case. This change of name would not solve the problem of confusion, rather it would tend to confound it. We should remember that we have been known as the S.P.G.B. for over 50 years. Should we abandon our name now and another organisation start up calling itself the S.P.G.B. a further confusion will arise.

Voting on Fulham Amendment: Delete "British Section" and replace with the words "GREAT BRITAIN" Lost 14-34

Resolution Woodgreen and Hornsey: That the name of the Party be changed to WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY-BRITISH SECTION. Lost 14-34.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH AT 12-40p.m.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENCED AT 1-45 p.m.

Fraternal Greetings were read from:
Socialist Party of New Zealand.
Socialist Party of Australia.
World Socialist Party of America.
Vienna Socialist Group
Comrade Hart, an ex -Islington member now resident in South Africa.
Comrade Dempsey of The Socialist Party of Ireland attended Conference
He expressed Fraternal Greetings from our comrades in Ireland, and addressed Conference informing it of their difficulties and efforts in propagating Socialism in Ireland.

It was generally agreed that Fraternal Greetings be sent to all the Companion Parties and Groups overseas.

Charge Against S.W. London Branch.

Coster E.C.I want to make clear at the outset, that I am not here to state personal views. I am here to state the facts which led up to the charge. If you have this statement in front of you, then you have as much as we have. This is of the greatest importance, all of it is of the greatest importance. We claim that the M.F.C.F. was another political organisation, seeking to hold a particular meeting. I want to draw your attention to the aims of this meeting. Coster then read the letter from the M.F.C.F. which had led up to the branch being charged. He also read the rest of the statement drawn up on the matter, adding his comments as necessary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY now read the statement of the South West London Branch to the delegation.

A S.W. London member stated that at no time had the E.C. officially asked the branch for the names of those members responsible for the resolution.

S.W. London member, The branch thought it inadvisable to send the names and Comrade Ambridge opposed such a course when he came to the Branch.

Hampstead Delegate asked if a member of S.W. London had been delegated to speak for the branch. The answer was in the negative.

Kingston Delegate We are aware from the nature of the matter that there is a division of opinion on this matter. I submit that the statement from S.W. London is reasonable and conciliatory, therefore I think that we should not in this specific instance ask any

S.W. London members to speak.

The offending resolution was rescinded: it is on record that views by themselves do not constitute action detrimental. Where is the case, E.C. Member. I have not got any bouquets to hand out to the branch or the E.C. The E.C. have sadly mismanaged the whole affair! It is a very serious matter to suspend a branch. Had the branch taken any action to defy the E.C.'s decision the E.C. would have been justified in suspending the branch. The branch took no action in conflict with the E.C.'s decision, in fact they rescinded the resolution as requested. The E.C. came back with the demand that the branch should get the assurances as requested from those members concerned. I agree with the E.C.'s original decision and emphatically disagree with the original resolution of the branch. No one would call that odd assortment of people known as the M.F.C.F. a political party. Only in so far as the E.C. defined it as a political party is it so. Certain E.C. members disagreed with the decision. I think it is stretching it a shade too far. The E.C. took it a shade further, they have charged the branch. The branch is now up for consideration. You must consider whether the E.C.'s action is detrimental to the party. I suggest that this matter has gone too far, and the delegation should throw this out.

E.C. Member. First of all I would like you to look at the first clause of the branches statement. Reference has been made to the difference of opinion of E.C. members. The only difference of opinion is one of method. You will bear in mind that this matter has lasted over a year. I repeat that there has been no difference of opinion in this matter of E.C. members, or branches in the party. The only difference of opinion in this matter has been in S.W. London Branch. I had the job of attending this particular Branch as an E.C. Delegate, and I understood at the time what the reluctance was that made the branch refrain from putting the E.C.'s proposition to the members concerned. I would suggest to you that if there has been any blunder, it was not the E.C., it was the branch. You must accept the statement that they have sent out. The E.C. is in the position that the branch must be responsible for its members. Your E.C. I suggest had no other alternative but to bring this matter to you. This charge comes before you because of the inefficiency of the branch. The branch won't deal with these individuals, so conference must.

Paddington Delegate. The E.C. is charging the branch because the branch refuses to get an assurance from the members. It is on the views of those members whether they can be shown to be detrimental to the interests of the party that this revolves. No where can I see any evidence that these members or the branch are opposed to the D. of P. If the holding of views about sending observers and taking part merely as observers is detrimental to the interests of the party then this position is ridiculous. No case to be made out of action detrimental.

FLOOR RESOLUTION, Resolution Bryan and May. "That in the opinion of this conference the E.C.'s charge against S.W. London Branch has not been proven."

Paddington Delegate. The branch has been at fault in that it has been weak for a long time; but that is true of many branches. There is one attitude that the party has adopted with regard to members views. That views alone are not action detrimental; they must be acted upon. The party when admitting a prospective member expects him to agree with the D. of P. and the party's case in general, but it has never taken the view that a member's views must remain static. This has become a principle over a matter of years. What one is to consider is how final is the disagreement. Any case must be judged on its merits. We do not think that the party has been harmed by these members holding these views. If there has been harm then that is a ction detrimental, but we do not think that such is the case.

Ealing Delegate. I don't see how you can send an observer if you are going to swell a chor us. That means you are going to support such organisations. Whether we should throw anybody out, was thrashed out two years ago. The E.C. were acting quite properly in asking for such assurances. The trouble with members is, they pass one resolution one year and are not prepared to back it up the next. Resolution Willmott and Lawrence (Lewisham) "That discussion be confined to Comrade Trotman and delegates" Lost 17-19;
The vote was challenged and lost. Lost 19-20.

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Hampstead Delegate. Hampstead branch is in full support of the E.C.'s action. Holding these views is incompatible. If we don't take action we shall still have members with views in conflict with the principles of the Party.
S.W.London member.

I speak as a branch member and not as a member of the minority group. Most of what has been said is irrelevant. I have been prepared to debate my opinions with any E.C. member any time. I am always prepared to state my views. The branch were reluctant to ask for these assurances. The E.C. should have charged the members concerned, not the branch, but they have not done so. It is not the D. of P. which is now the dogma but certain aspects of it. I can think of nothing worse than that. In past years the branch wanted to collaborate with what is surely considered to be worse—a political party, the I.L.P. on the matter of jointly approaching the D.B.C. for time on the air but there was no suggestion of throwing us out then. We could cite many questions of precedent on this matter. For instance, when eight members of the E.C. voted to affiliate with the Central Board of Conscientious Objectors—there was no question then of throwing them out. As the matter had no thing to do with the D. of P. the branch saw no reason to ask for the assurances. The E.C. should have gone to the individual members and made a clear cut issue of it.

E.C. Member.

Some members in discussion contend that there is no question of the M.F.C.F. being a political Party. If an organisation sets out with one of its objects that of helping to establish "Liberty and a self-reliant economy in the protectorates", that is a political movement, a political organisation with political objectives, made up chiefly of politicians. It is a question of principle. Individual members should have represented themselves to the E.C. as individuals and not as S.W.London Branch—then the situation would have been different and S.W.London Branch would not now be charged. All statements have been made in the name of S.W.London Branch. Nobody has proposed what else the E.C. might have done. What action can be taken? The solution lies with the branch. Their refusal to acknowledge that they have an answer in their hands.

E.C. Member. I stand guilty here of dogma, and if the party is not going to take this stand we might as well pack up. You will find that the E.C. has taken this matter very seriously and has only made a factual statement.

E.C. Member. I attended the Conference of the M.F.C.F. We should next time grasp the opportunity to reply to the invitation that we would attend, in no way compromising our principles and to put our point of view. There would have been every opportunity of the Party's view being placed before a large audience. It was an unwisely written answer to the original invitation.

Paddington Delegate. The subject matter of the charge has been largely lost in the discussion of the original resolution. The members would not put forward these views in public so as to make it the party's view. It has never been suggested that they wanted to lend support to the M.F.C.F. as a body nor to support that basis of the conference mentioned in Fenner Brockway's letter. The minority did not suggest supporting the M.F.C.F. as a whole. The E.C. should have asked for the members' names and then charged the members concerned if they thought the matter sufficiently worth while pursuing. The method they used causes more harm than the original matter.

Voting on Resolution Lost 12-28.

Resolution: Wilson (Dartford) & Catt (Dartford)
That after hearing the official statements of the E.C. and S.W.London Branch plus the evidence of members, this Conference is of the opinion that the charge against S.W.London be dismissed.

Lost. 8-25.

Resolution Willmott (Hackney) & Lawrence (Lewisham): That this Conference holds that the charge against S.W.London Branch be dropped but urge that members of this branch be asked to face up to the implications contained in some of its members' views and utterances and exercise due responsibility that such members shall at all times act in accordance with the principles and policy of the Party.

Carried 23-13.

Hackney Delegate. I could not support the bald resolution of Edlington. The E.C. were wrong in taking the high-handed method. Statements I heard at S.W. London branch to support proportional representation and to support the Rent Act are not in accordance with the Party's case or principles. The Conference should add its weight to the E.C. to the effect that the members of the S.W. London branch should take due care that people who express the views they do should be asked just how far they go. Every member should be given by them opportunity to fully discuss their views, to bring these to the E.C. and they can then take a decision upon the information and material at their disposal. We shall have safeguarded the principles of the party and its policy if we drop the charge and take this action.

Resolution Mostyn & Francis: "That this Conference endorses the action of the E.C. in asking the members of the S.W. London Branch for an assurance that they agree with the Party's case, and in so far that they have not yet received that assurance; this Conference instructs the S.W. London Branch through the E.C. to give that assurance." The Resolution was put to the vote and Lost 19-19.

The vote was challenged and the resolution was Carried 20-19.

Resolution Mitchell (West Ham) & McKone (Wood Green & Hornsey.)

"This Conference does not agree that the S.W. London Branch acted detrimental to the Party's interest, but in view of all the circumstances exonerates the E.C. from blame in the action they took." The resolution was lost by a LARGE MAJORITY.

Resolution Critchfield & McCarthy "That the two resolutions passed go to a Party Poll of the membership." AGREED.

THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNED AT 5-40.p.m.

SATURDAY SESSION COMMENCED AT 2-30p.m.

Party Organisation and Membership continued.

Resolution 2. Ealing: "That a General Secretary's Committee be formed to work under the General Secretary, to assist him to keep accurate records of Party Conferences, Meetings, Polls and results of Ballots." Ealing Delegate. Ealing have been getting the impression over the last two or three years that there has been an accumulation of work at H.O. and that things are happening that should not happen i.e. loss of Ballot papers. Ealing Branch were interested in running a lottery: there were no records about this when the branch asked at H.O. Impression was that things were not kept very efficiently and easily accessible.

Islington Delegate. Don't you think that the H.O. Assistant can manage without having a committee.

Hampstead Delegate. Are the records in a satisfactory state or not?

The General Secretary appreciated that one branch appreciated that work at H.O. has been difficult in recent years and that they were trying to remedy the problem. He and the Assistant Secretary don't think it essential to have a General Secretary's Committee. It was difficult to allocate work: assistants could always be used: they could present themselves week by week for work, but it is difficult to farm out work as and when it arises. Records at H.O. have been in a disastrous state but now records are in good condition. All things can now be found. We have also this year an H.O. Assistant, she is very reliable and has given a lot of help. She is taking on to herself more and more routine work and a lot of problems which existed two years ago are being solved. E.C. Reports are now being sent out regularly, and general routine work is being done by regular members. Lewisham Delegate. We are opposing the resolution. The Party has sufficient committees: the work is covered by the General Secretary., Assistant Secretary, H.O. Assistant and the Ballot Committee. If inefficient, no extra committee will make it efficient. There are a limited number of people willing to do work and these members will just be put on another committee.

Edmonds (Lewisham) (As ex General Secretary) You are asking another

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to -committee to take over the work of another committee-Ballot committee. We have too many committees. Most of these members on committees are E.C. members who are already on other committees. All the work involved fall on the shoulders of 18-20 people. During the time in question by Ealing, the General Secretary was ill and all the work fell on the Assistant Secretary. The majority of the work of this organisation is done by about 25 people. You members should go back to your branches and point out that the membership does not do half the work it should and that the membership should take its share of the work.

Ealing Delegate. I agree with Edmonds. He agrees with our case that even with an assistant there is more than enough work to do. With an assistant, more and more work will devolve on her. No answer to say we have too many committees if there is work to do. A committee is needed to co-ordinate all the work.

Voting Taken, Carried 25-21.

Resolution 3. Wood Green & Hornsey, and item B for discussion were now discussed together.

Delegates from Bloomsbury, Hampstead, Wood Green & Hornsey, Islington & Paddington stressed as their main agreement that as the majority of the active members lived in the North London and Central area therefore Head Office should be located near to the Kings Cross or Camden Town areas. This would in their opinion cut down the travelling time of many members who attend at Clapham. Should a move towards the centre of London be defeated it was the general view of those branches supporting the resolution that the E.C. should endeavour to hire a small room or hall centrally situated to serve as an E.C. meeting place and Central London Office.

Opposing this resolution and the suggestion of hiring a room in Central London for E.C. meetings, the Delegates from Southend Tottenham and Lewisham stated that wherever H.O. was located some members would have to travel long distances. It would also not help to have E.C. meetings held away from the H.O. where records were readily available the cash involved would only add to our financial difficulties at present.

Voting on the Adendum.

Add: Provided that premises can be obtained that are in the Executive Committees opinion suitable and justify the cost and difficulty of a removal.

CARRIED 26-15.

Voting on the resolution as adended.

Resolution Wood Green & Hornsey: "That this Conference instructs the Executive Committee to take immediate steps to secure new Head Office Premises Centrally situated in the London Postal Area provided that premises can be obtained that are in the E.C.'s opinion suitable and justify the cost and difficulty of a removal".

CARRIED 30-11.

Resolution Willmott (Hackney) & Grisley (Southend):
"That Literature be Taken now"

Amendment Ayres (Hampstead) & Francis (Islington):

"That only resolution 5 & 6 and item E for discussion be taken"

Amendment Carried by Large Majority.

Sub Res Carried by Large Majority.

Delegates From Paddington Hackney Birmingham & Wickford together with one E.C. member supported the resolution for the following reasons. That a regular correspondence column in the S.S. would make for a more stimulating journal, they suggested that the letters published from non-members and members should be left to contributors to answer with the proviso that the Editorial Committee edit and answer such correspondence as they think necessary. Editorial replies if any, should be kept short, and contributors be asked to keep their comments short and to the point. Whereas Delegates from Kelvingrove Southend, Bloomsbury and Hampstead with two E.C. members strongly opposed the proposition that a correspondence column be inserted in the "Socialist Standard".

It was their general view that facilities were already available, and correspondence was being received and replied to. They strongly opposed any editing of letters by either the E.C. or the Editorial Committee, as such practice could reasonably be construed as censorship. They claimed that the Party and its members have had a journal (Forum) at its disposal, inviting criticism but it had fallen into disuse. It has been the E.S.'s view over the years that comment on articles means attack and the original writer of the article will want to reply, and members would attack each other in the S.S.

Amendment (Hackney Branch): Delete "Editorial Committee" and insert instead "Executive Committee". Lost 16-30.

Resolution Paddington Branch: "That a regular section of the Socialist Standard be reserved for letters from readers (Both members and non-members); readers being encouraged to comment on articles and also on other correspondence. The Editorial Committee shall exercise its discretion on the publication of correspondence and reply only when deemed necessary."

Carried 25-22.

Resolution 6. Hackney.

Adendum Paddington-3

" Paddington-2

" Paddington-1

Adendum 3: Add: and that one of the titles be "Dirty work" Lost 19-22.

Adendum 2: Add: and that one of the titles be "Why workers should oppose overtime" Carried 23-20.

Adendum 1: Add: and that one of the titles be "The Rent Bill and You." Carried 23-19.

These were moved without discussion.

Resolution as Added Carried 40-4.

Item E. Paddington: "A Policy for the Socialist Standard".

Discussion now took place on "Item For discussion E".

Paddington Delegate. The sales of the S.S. have long been precarious. If it was not for the efforts of those comrades who canvass, they would have fallen drastically long ago. We think it is the contents which make the paper; the articles which go in the S.S. these days are generally speaking more likely to drive readers away. Recognising that it is a matter of training writers, the branch is hoping to start a writers class, and we shall get in touch with the Classes Organiser to this effect. There are various subjects on which Party members are at loggerheads. T.V. Automation, Psychology etc., and we feel that there is a general Party viewpoint which could be made on these subjects.

Birmingham Delegate. We back up Paddington on this matter, the only articles that are published are those that the Editorial Committee consider are following the Party line or are too vague to be controversial.

Hampstead Delegate. I have a sympathy with those who constructively criticise any aspect of the Party's work. I agree that the writers for the S.S. are very bad; but every member who writes for the S.S. is an amateur. What Paddington Branch really wants is experts on History, Science etc., to write for us. I think that the Paddington Branch are doing a good thing in criticising the S.S. but I would suggest that they try to write the articles that they want, and they should not be discouraged if they are refused by the Editorial Committee. I think that members should not be at loggerheads on the various subjects that have been mentioned. We should be one on these things. I am a dogmatist, and I think that on Socialism we should all be dogmatists. You don't have to be a Dr. of Philosophy or Science to write for the S.S.

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SUNDAY SESSION COMMENCED AT 11-30 a.m.

The Vice Chairman could not attend the Sunday Session, also the Chairman Comrade George informed the Delegation that he could not be present in the afternoon. He suggested to the meeting that they appoint Comrade R.O. Critchfield as Vice Chairman and that he could take over in the afternoon. This was agreed to by the Delegation and Comrade R.O. Critchfield sat as Vice Chairman.

The Standing Orders Committee reported that the new method of voting on amendments to rules by entering For or Against on a form prepared by them and denoting the various amendments had been completed. They asked the Conference whether they approved of this method. Resolution Webster (Kelvingrove) & Cottis (Southend): "That this method as adopted be carried out at the next Conference".

CARRIED NEM CON.

Amendments to Rule.

Amendments to Rule 2, Camberwell Branch: Insert on line six after the word "Branch" the words "Members of 65 years of age and over being under no further obligation to pay dues".

Carried 28-19.

Rule 4, Paddington. Paddington Delegate stressed that under no circumstances should a central Branch member be barred from speaking or voting at a branch because of his financial standing. Members other than Central Branch members even in arrears with their dues are still allowed by rule to speak in, and vote at their branch meetings on all matters, but at present as the rule stands Central Branch members do not enjoy this privilege.

Lost 23-30.

Bloomsbury & Paddington.

Rule 19, Bloomsbury & Paddington: Branches: Delete "Assistant Treasurer" Lewisham Addendum: Add and Assistant Secretary".

Lewisham Delegate (Speaking to the Addendum) We are in the rather contradictory position of being opposed to our own Addendum.

Meeting earlier, the branch were in favour of this Addendum

It was thought that if the E.C. appointed the Assistant General Secretary it would be a better procedure; especially if the member concerned were ever sick, or away or fell down on the job. We changed our minds later as it was thought on reflection that it would be better to have the A.G.S. elected by the membership.

Bloomsbury Delegate. We think that to have the Treasurer and General Secretary advising the E.C. on who is most capable and fitted to be their assistants is the method adopted.

E.C. Member There is a reason why this should have arisen. There was no nomination for the post of Assistant Treasurer. As you know we have a H.O. Assistant and she does the job automatically. If you appointed an Assistant Treasurer he would have no work to do.

Voting on the Addendum Lost 12-32.

Voting on the Resolution Lost 22-22.

Rule 28, Camberwell: That the rule be amended by deleting all after the word "Constituency" on line 4.

Camberwell Delegate. The branch recognise that it is difficult to get the correct number of signatures on the nomination papers, and this obviously limits us with regard to Electoral Activity. That is why we want to alter the rule. The resolution was put to the vote and lost 9-42.

DELEGATE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS.

Resolution 4, Hackney Branch: "That the 1957 Delegate Meeting be held at Head Office"

Amendment Paddington Branch: Delete "Head Office" and insert instead "A Central London Hall".

Voting was taken without discussion.

Paddington Amendment

Lost 6-34.

Carried 38-7.

Resolution Francis (Islington) & Cottis (Southend): "That we proceed with literature." Agreed.

Item For Discussion F. (Kelvingrove): The possibility of an earlier publishing day for the Socialist Standard for the purpose of speedier distribution owing to the necessity of having the Standard in newsagents hands at the beginning of the month.

Kelvingrove Delegate. We have kept the dates of receiving the S.S. and we always get them several days late. This does not help us in our canvassing efforts. We have also found that when we get the S.S. late it affects our sales through the newsagents. Our contention is, if it is at all practicable that the S.S. should be made available just before the end of the month.

Editorial Committee. This is not really our pigeon as it involves things that are really nothing to do with us. The printing trade has altered from what it used to be before the war. The printing trade is overburdened with work; it has labour difficulties. And unless we are prepared to pay a fantastic price—which of course we are not—we cannot do anything about it. Lack of material is one of our main difficulties. We seem to get articles too late in the month to get the S.S. out on time. If we are instructed we would go to the printers earlier; this of course would make us less topical. We shall also have to miss a number of meetings that we normally publish through going to press early.

Hackney Delegate: Is it possible to have a stop press in the S.S.? Editorial Committee. We could do this with notices, but this would hardly apply to articles. I don't think that is a practical way out of it.

Resolution Webster (Kelvingrove) & Bryan (Paddington): "That this Conference recommends that the E.C. instructs the Editorial Committee to make every effort to advance the publishing day of the S.S. so that the current issue will be available at the distribution centres on the last day of the previous month. Addendum Cook (Birmingham) & Francis (Islington) "And that a notice regularly appear in the S.S. reminding contributors of the last day of the receipt of copy".

Addendum Carried 24-2.

Resolution Carried Large Majority.

Item for Discussion G. Kelvingrove Branch: Methods of increasing the circulation of the Socialist Standard, either by paid canvassers or through wholesale distributors.

Kelvingrove Delegate. The Central Literature Sales Committee's report makes it plain that the sales have increased over the past year. But the actual increase is not more than 100 or so, and I don't think that that is a marked increase. One of the things that has been stressed has been that we must get out and work, we agree with that but it is not enough. If we go back over past reports we find that sales were much higher in the past, and in actual fact figures have fallen. There are two methods by which we can overcome this decline in sales. Newsagents orders is one, and the other is by having paid canvassers.

Lewisham Delegate. If Kelvingrove has practical results, they should formulate their results and circulate the statistics and results.

Camberwell Delegate. We support the idea of distributing through wholesalers, but are opposed to the idea of having paid canvassers.

Item for Discussion Kelvingrove.

Kelvingrove Delegate.: One of the difficulties of this question is finance. I think we can say that over the past few years we have lost a £100. on the S.S. The real reason for selling the S.S. should be to get as many workers to read it as possible, 6d would not be a deterrent to selling it. The circulation is poor, not because of the price, but because working men and women are not interested in it. We can say that they are prepared to pay for what they are interested in.

Resolution Kerr & Thurlow (West Ham) "That this Conference recommends that the price of the S.S. be increased to 6d and efforts be made to revert to the original better quality paper."

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Delegates from West Ham- Southend & Islington Branches were in favour of increasing the price of the S.S. to 6d. Although the Islington Delegate supported the increase in price he spoke against having better quality paper as its cost would negate any saving made by increasing the price. It was generally stressed by those supporting an increased price that 6d would not alter the sales. Many people were already paying 6d for their S.S. Those supporting the view that a better quality paper be used, did so because in their opinion many members wished to keep their copies of the S.S. to refer to in later years, the paper now used was not suitable for this purpose.

Speaking against the increase in price the Delegates from Birmingham Ealing and Wickford stressed again that an increase in price would not solve the problem of falling sales, only an increased effort on the part of all members in selling more copies of the S.S. would help.

Central Literature Sales Committee. If it wasn't for about 25 members you would have to pay a lot more than 6d. for your S.S... I am amazed at some members saying that they know what the public needs, as they never see a member of the public. A lot of this discussion sounds unreal, when you realise how few of these people who have contributed to the discussion actually get our and try to sell the S.S. You should look at the figures that we publish on the bottom of our report.

Voting on the resolution
Lost 9-14.

Resolution Webster (Kelvingrove) & Cottis (Southend): "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to call a Party Poll on the question Should the price of the S.S. be increased from 4d to 6d. and that the E.E. supply the following information-

Monthly figures of publishing costs, income from sales, circulation figures, publication figures, annual advertising costs for the years 1954, 55, and 56 to branches.

Carried 18-9.

Conference Adjourned at 1-10 for lunch.

Conference Reconvened at 2 .p.m.

Resolution 12. Birmingham: "That this Conference affirms that because of its expanding capacity for wealth production Capitalism's crises, whether destructive war or non-productive slump, tend always to intensify, involving the wastage of life and wealth on an ever increasing scale".

Birmingham Delegate: The basis of the proposition that we are putting to you is based on what we have read in the S.S. and what London speakers have said off our platform when they have visited us. We have always accepted that crises and wars get worse in line with what Marx wrote. We find later that according to the E.C. that we are not in step. The Delegate now made references to an article over the name of E.W. in the S.S. of August 1939. and continued; These quotes back up our case that things are getting worse. Speaking in favour of the resolutions amendment, the Delegates (With the exception of Birmingham) the Delegates from Birmingham, Wickford and Hampstead generally agreed with the views expressed by the Birmingham Delegation. Hampstead Delegate in his discussion suggested the need for the Party to set up a committee of investigation into the causes of crises of Capitalism.

Opposing the resolutions Amendment the Delegates from Hackney and Kelvingrove agreed with the Editorial Committee's statement which replied to Birmingham's criticisms.

Editorial Committee member : It is not true that the S.S. has put a contrary view. We still have crises and will probably some time get a big one. Capitalism expands and productivity increases. It does not simply follow that wars and crises get worse. It is not true that Marx and Engels held consistent views on crises.

Marx in his later years did not formulate any view that crises get worse. Crises have been varying in intensity over the last 150 years. In the 1880s and the 1930s you had two really great depressions which are unparalleled in the history of Capitalism. You have to consider why crises happen. The pattern is of long term deep depressions, crises do not happen because of mere increase in productivity. Disproportion and anarchy of production is the reason. Automation- It is not true that there is a great increase of productivity with automation. With regard to wars, the biggest wars were at the beginning of the 19th Century, the Napoleonic and the American Civil Wars. It is not a simple pattern of crises and wars getting necessarily more destructive. It depends on the equal balance of the forces. The development of Capitalism cannot be summed up merely by looking at wars and crises. One must see the nature of the cause of crises: we must not limit ourselves to these two things to cover the whole field. The reference to radiation (Strontium 90), as a factor in loss of life and worsening conditions is a good one; but this should be put into perspective. True a lot of people will die from bone cancer, but during the same time a lot more people will die from road accidents, industrial accidents etc., The Socialist Case is not to set up as prophets, but we explain why these things happen.

Birmingham Delegate (Winding up discussion): We can say that we have had an economic crisis since the beginning of the 1939-45 war. Wars and slumps are inseparable from crises. They all mean the destruction or non-production of wealth. The discussion bears out how much confusion there is in the Party, and I therefore welcome Hampstead's suggestion for a committee. (He now quoted from volume 3 of Capital dealing with crises). Marx did not say that war is an economic factor, but war is an economic factor today, bearing in mind that a huge part of the budgets of all countries is spent on War or preparations for War. I was very much amused by E.W.'s recantation, he says he was wrong then, so presumably he is right now. But the chances are that if he was wrong then, he is still now! The point is that we should get down to what we agree on. The Resolution was Lost. 9-32.

Amendment Wickford Branch: Delete the words "intensify, involving" and insert instead the word "incur".
Lost 4-34.

Resolution Young (Hampstead) & Cook (Birmingham): "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to appoint a study group to investigate the validity of the criticisms of the Party's statements of the Crises of Capitalism with a view to defining the Party's attitude more clearly."
Carried 25-4.

PROPAGANDA.

Resolution 10. Hackney: "That the Executive Committee make strenuous efforts to maintain regular outdoor propaganda meetings at Hyde Park."
This resolution was agreed to without discussion.

Resolution Mostyn & Francis (Islington): "That this Conference recommends the Executive Committee to consider the advisability of asking Paddington Branch to assume responsibility for the Hyde Park Meetings."

Propaganda Committee Member: If this suggestion were practicable it would be a very good thing. The propaganda Committee have made many endeavours to get Paddington Branch to do more with regard to this meeting. The branch have always been responsible for the selling of Literature at Hyde Park.
The Resolution was Lost by a large Majority.

Parliamentary Activity.

Resolution 11: Kelvingrove: "That only a constituency in which at least 600 Socialist Standards have been sold regularly for a period of at least six months prior to the Election, be contested".
Kelvingrove Delegate: The resolution is not to try to promote Literature Sales. What we are concerned with is that there should be some consistent activity in a constituency before we contest it. If you have not got large sales of Literature in a constituency, then you should not contest it. The Literature sales indicate whether we have support or not.

Bloomsbury Delegate: We do not want to put anything down that is going to limit our future activities.

Baling Delegate: We have an ex-comrade Healey who sells 600 copies of the Socialist Standard from time to time in the Wythenshaw area. Yet Manchester branch is virtually non-existent, and you couldn't possibly hold elections there. This shows at least one flaw in this resolution.

E.C. Member: This is a bad resolution. If passed it would probably mean no electoral activity for a long time. Perhaps this is the intention of the movers.

Kelvingrove Delegate: I agree with the E.C. member, it would stop electoral activity in the meantime. Each lot of electoral activity has seen a fall off in the membership. In the present circumstances it is useless to put forward candidates. The proposition is that you should put the work in before hand, if you want to achieve any results.

Lost 4-43.

FINANCE

Item for Discussion K: Wood Green & Hornsey Branch: That we consider ways and means of raising funds, other than merely asking members or subscribers for them.

Wood Green & Hornsey Delegate: Suggested as a means of raising additional funds, the letting off of part of Head Office Premises. Southend Delegate suggested that members and sympathisers be asked to pledge themselves to donate at least a shilling per month, and an appeal could be made in the columns of the Socialist Standard.

Education.

H.O. Organisers Report.

E. Willmott (Classes Organiser): There is nothing to report. I got out a series of syllabuses and tutors to do the classes. There were a series of discussions on Education which were fairly well attended. Notices were sent out. The syllabuses were much too ambitious. There will be three classes organised this summer, economics, industrial history, writers class and speakers class.

Item for Discussion D. Kelvingrove Branch: The possibility of appointing an E.C. member or specific Party Official to the task of dealing with complaints from provincial branches.

Resolution Webster (Kelvingrove). "That this Conference recommends to the E.C. that they appoint a Party Official whose terms of reference shall be:

1. To deal with complaints from Provincial Branches.
2. To present the views of Provincial Branches at E.C. and Committee meetings when necessary.

Kelvingrove Delegate: The appearance of this resolution is the poor attention that we receive in the Provinces. Since the appointment of Comrade E. Keys the position has been better, but we want to make sure that it does not happen again. The idea would be that this member would express the point of view of the Provincial Branches.

Lost 8-11.

Resolution Lawrence & Coffey: "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to include in the Central Organisers terms of reference the task of dealing with complaints from provincial branches and voicing their point of view to sub-committees of the E.C."

Agreed.

Resolution Cook(Birmingham)&Docherty(Islington)"That the E.C.s report be adopted",
Agreed.

Item for Discussion A. Wood Green & Hornsey.: The immediate task of the Socialist Party.

Wood Green Delegate. Our propaganda at the moment is too wide spread, we should choose one or two areas and concentrate on them

Item for Discussion C. Bloomsbury: Should Delegate Meeting revert to one full day?

Bloomsbury Delegate. One day is more than enough for an Autumn Delegate Meeting, and we can meet at H.O. and carry on as long as we like. If the one day is not enough we can always decide to meet for another Sunday session.

Kersley & Gillis (Bloomsbury) Resolution: "That this Conference recommends that the Autumn Delegate Meeting revert to one full day."
Lost 9-14.

Item for Discussion F. Kelvingrove: The price of the Western Socialist.

Kelvingrove Delegate. We pay the full price for the Western Socialist, and as we do so when we deal with the new agents we lose quite a bit on the deal, and therefore we think the price should be increased to 8d to allow us to cover this loss.

E.C. Member. If we sold all the Western Socialists we got we would make a small profit. At the moment we lose about £3-10-0, or so. If a provincial branch are losing quite a bit they can always approach the E.C. to have this defrayed. We could cut down on the W.S. order and by doing make sure of selling the lot and making a profit, but it has always been the Party's policy to keep this standing order with the W.S.P. as we gather they rely on this regular order, and to encourage them in their efforts.

Lewisham Delegate. Is it a fact that most of the W.S. are sold to members?

E.C. Member. I don't really know, we are hoping to step up the subscriptions to the 100 mark.

Resolution Webster (Kelvingrove)&Lawrence (Lewisham) "That this Conference recommends to the E.C. that the selling price of the Western Socialist be increased to 8d."

Lewisham Delegate. I am instructed to support any resolution which puts up the price of the W.S. to anything up to 9d.

Islington Delegate. If we pass this resolution I think it will kill the W.S. sales.

The resolution was Lost by a large majority.

Item for Discussion J. Birmingham. The style of Party printed propaganda, with particular reference to the Suez Manifesto.

Birmingham Delegate. Our criticism of the Suez leaflet is the language of it. We think it is a little archaic.

Bloomsbury Delegate. I agree with this sort of language in a leaflet of this type. I think it should be emotional in character.

Birmingham Delegate. This is the type of language that the Salvation Army use. We of Birmingham would be prepared to write leaflets of this character when necessary, and of course, in contemporary idiom.

Southend Delegate. I don't think that the Suez Manifesto was colourful enough. I think it could have been even better.

Hardy (Editorial Committee.) If an emergency arises I hope that Birmingham will send in their efforts. The E.C. will welcome them.

Hampstead Delegate. The leaflets went like hot cakes, that is proof of whether they were any good or not.

Islington Delegate. The leaflets were just the job when we distributed them at a Labour Party meeting in Trafalgar Square.

McClatchie. The World Socialist Party wrote to tell us that they were proud to associate with the Party that got out the Manifesto.

Birmingham Delegate. We were not attacking the leaflet as a whole, but rather the language. We are not opposed to flowery language, but we want 20th Century flowery language, not 19th Century flowery language.

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Other business.

Re Eene Wood Green & Hornsey. Re Rule 10 and the distribution of literature. Branches should be able to distribute pamphlets on topical subjects under their own name.

The adjournment was agreed to on the motion of Webster (Kelvingrove) and Mitchell (Camberwell) at 5-25.p.m.